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Testimony to Children, Families, Health and Human Services Interim Committee
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Chairman Ehli, members of the committee my name is Todd Wood and I am the Executive Director of Area II Agency on Aging in Roundup, MT. Our Agency provides services to Senior's and individuals with disability in the eleven Counties of South Central Montana including the Northern Cheyenne and Crow reservations.

I am here today in support of a number of bills drafted for consideration that would significantly impact community based services in Montana.

LCCF3a – I support the creation of a position of facilitator for Alzheimer's & Related Dementia (ADRD) services. This will ensure coordination of services for individuals with ADRD statewide.

LCCF4a – Local Alzheimer's & Related Dementia Services through the Area Agencies on Aging. The Area Agencies on Aging are uniquely located throughout the state to assist individuals with services at the local level. Increased funding would be directed at educating and assisting folks in accessing services and connecting with local resources; support and training for caregivers; Providing congregate & home delivered meals; transportation services; homemaking; Respite care and other services to assist individuals to remain in their homes and avoid institutional care.

LCCF5a – I am confused by this bill. Montana has a current grant funded program within the Aging Services Bureau the Lifespan Respite Program. The program uses a voucher system to approve respite for caregivers statewide regardless of disability of the person being cared for. There has been a great deal of effort in creating this program which involved a great deal of work by many. I could see that some of what this bill is asking to do could maybe be achieved by adding funds for a separate service within that program. Does not seem to make sense to duplicate much of what has already been done.

LCCF6a - Increase service slots and reimbursement structure for the Medicaid Home & Community Based Services Program. I am in favor of this bill. I feel that the reimbursement structure for residential care for individuals with dementia needs to be addressed. I applaud the effort that went into creating the example tiered reimbursement rate. With current reimbursement level, the reimbursement rates do not provide adequate reimbursement to providers of assisted living for individuals with moderate to severe dementia. The result is too often placement out of area or in a state facility which presents a hardship on families to visit and spend time with their loved ones. Involvement of the family is vital to provide companionship, advocacy and to oversee the care of their loved ones.

LCCF-7B Strengthening guardianship services in Montana. Create a WINGS Committee and steering committee, establish a public guardianship grant program. I am in favor of all sections of this bill. There is a great deal of work to shore up our current system and feel this bill will allow this work to go forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I would be happy to answer any questions.

Todd Wood
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Area II Agency on Aging